

CHRIST'S CONNECTION WITH SINNERS THE SOURCE OF HIS GLORY NO. 2070

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1889
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Isaiah 53:12.

WE may regard this verse as a kind of covenant made between the everlasting God, the infinite Jehovah on the one part, and our great Representative, Mediator and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, on the other part. The incarnate God is to be bruised and wounded. He is to pour out His soul unto death, and by travail of soul He is to bear the sin of many. And then His ultimate reward is to be that God will divide Him a portion with the great, and He Himself shall divide the spoil with the strong. Note the double recompense and joyfully distinguish between the two divisions—that which Jehovah makes for Him and that which He makes Himself. Our champion, like another David, is to confront and conquer the great enemy of the Lord's people, and then He is to have His reward. Unlike David, He is to pour out His soul and die in the conflict, and then He is to receive a glorious portion from the Father, and He is also Himself to seize upon the spoil of the vanquished foe.

At this moment, our Lord Jesus is enjoying the reward which His Father has allotted Him—“Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great.” He is no more despised and rejected. Who dares to dishonor a majesty so surpassing? See how the whole host of heaven adores Him! All the pomp of glory is displayed around Him. To Him the cherubim and seraphim continually cry in their ceaseless worship and undivided adoration. The four-and-twenty elders, representing the ancient and the present church cast their crowns at His feet. And the myriads of the redeemed whose robes are washed in His blood pour forth their love and life at His feet. He has His portion with the great—none are as great as He.

He is not only King but kingmaker for He has made His most humble followers priests and kings unto God and His royalty is multiplied in each of them. How much His Father honors Him, it is not for my tongue to tell you. And if it were possible for me to tell it in words, yet the inner meaning could never be compassed by such narrow hearts as ours. He has infinite glory from the great Father God. He lives forever, King of kings and Lord of lords and all hallelujahs come up before Him. Imagination cannot reach the height of His immeasurable majesty and happiness.

And why these honors? What has He done to merit these immeasurable glories? The answer is that He has done these four things—“He has poured out His soul unto death; He was numbered with the transgressors; He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

In addition to what His Father gives Him, it is worthy of contemplation that our Lord has taken, in His life-conflict, great spoils with His own hands. “He shall divide the spoil with the strong.” He has spoiled sin, death and hell—each one the vanquisher of our race, the spoiler of the entire world. He has overcome these three, and in each case has led captivity captive. What must be the spoils of such victories? All the processions of triumph that ever went up the Sacra Via to the capitol of Rome we may dismiss as empty pageants. All the glories of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece are blots of the cruel past which sicken us in remembrance. These led liberty captive. But when He ascended on high He led captivity captive. Jesus blesses all by His victories and curses none. He spoiled no man of his goods—He only brought death on death, destruction on the destroyer and captivity upon captivity. In all His spoils men are gainers. And therefore, when the incarnate God divides the spoil with the strong, all His people may joyfully shout without the reservation of a sigh for the conquered and the spoiled. That was

a rich triumph and the spoils He won are spoils that enrich myriads of believers today and shall enrich them throughout all the ages that are to come.

And why these spoils? What has He done? These trophies—where were they won? What was the conflict? Here is the answer—“Because He has poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

It is a strange fact that I am going to declare, but it is no less true than strange—according to our text the extraordinary glories of Christ, as Savior, have all been earned by His connection with human sin. He has gotten His most illustrious splendor, His brightest jewels, His most divine crowns out of coming into contact with this poor fallen race. What is man? What are all men? Nothings, nobodies! This great globe itself; what is it in connection with the vast creation of God? One grain of the sweepings of dust behind the door! The small dust of the balance bears a larger proportion to the eternal hills than this little globe to the great worlds which speak to us across the midnight sky. Yet all those glittering worlds that we can see with the telescope bear an extremely minute proportion to the illimitable fields of divine creation. We know not that anywhere Christ ever came into contact with sin, except upon this little ball. We have no revelation of any other redemption. This obscure star is faith’s great marvel! How shall we comprehend that here the eternal Deity did take the nature of a man and here did suffer in the sinner’s place, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”? All the eyes of all the angels turn this way. This mystery is too great for them. They cannot compass its full meaning but desire to look into it. We know not that anywhere in all the vast creation of God there has ever been seen the likes of this matchless, unparalleled deed of divine grace—that the Son of God, in mighty love, should come down to earth and come into contact with human *sin* that He might put it away. No one imagines that our Lord has *often* suffered. No, He has been incarnate once and has been sacrificed but once. “Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” And this for guilty men! I am overwhelmed. I would gladly sit down in silence and give way to adoring wonder.

May the Holy Spirit, Himself, now aid me, for my need is great! I am going to speak about these four things very briefly. I have nothing of my own to say about them. I only want to put them before you as much as I can in their naked simplicity—there is a beauty in them which needs no describing, which would be degraded by any adornment of human speech. Here are four flints out of which you may strike sparks of divine fire if you are but willing to see their brightness. These four things that Jesus did, the four reasons why He is crowned with such superlative honor, are connected with *you*, if you have but faith to perceive the connection—so connected that they will save you—will even make you partake in the glory which has come of them.

I. The first source of the Mediator’s glory is that He, out of His love to guilty men, has Poured OUT HIS SOUL UNTO DEATH.

Remember that the penalty of sin is death. “The soul that sins, it shall die.” “For in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.” As God made us, we should not have died. There is about man, when he is in connection with God, no reason for death. But as soon as man touched evil he was divided from God and he took into his veins the poison which brings death with it and all its train of woes. Jesus Christ, our substitute, when He poured out His soul unto death, was bearing the penalty that is due to sin. This is taught in the Bible—in fact, it is the chief theme of Holy Scripture. Whenever sin was to be put away, it was by the sacrifice of a life. All through the Jewish law it stands conspicuous that, “Without shedding of blood is no remission of sin.” God has so impressed this truth upon humanity that you can scarcely go into any nation, however unenlightened, but there is connected with their religion the idea of sacrifice, and therefore the idea of the offering of a life on account of a broken law. Now, the Lord Jesus came into such connection with men that He bore the death penalty which guilty men had incurred.

Remember the expression—“He has poured out His soul unto death.” It is deliberate. “He has poured out His soul.” It is a libation presented with thought and care. Not the mere spilling of His blood but the resolute, determinate *pouring out* of His whole life unto its last drop—the pouring it out unto *death*. Now, Christ’s resolve to die for you and for me was not that of a brave soldier who rushes up to the cannon’s mouth in a moment of excitement. But He was practically pouring out His life from the day when His public ministry commenced, if not before. He was always dying, by living, at such a rate that

His zeal consumed Him—"The zeal of Your house has eaten Me up." Deliberately and as it were, drop by drop, He was letting His soul fall upon the ground—till at length, upon the tree of doom—He emptied it all out and cried, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. "He poured out His soul unto death."

As it was deliberate, so it was most real and true. I pray you do not think of Christ as pouring out His soul as though the outpouring was a kind of sentiment of self-abnegation. As though it made Him spend a sort of ecstatic life in dream-land and suffer only in thought, intent and sympathy. My Lord suffered as you suffer; only more keenly, for He had never injured His body or soul by any act of excess so as to take off the edge from His sensitiveness. His was the pouring out of a whole soul in all the phases of suffering into which perfect souls can pass. He felt the horror of sin as we who have sinned could not feel it, and the sight of evil afflicted Him much more than it does the purest among us. His was *real* suffering, *real* poverty, *real* weariness. And when He came to His last agony, His bloody sweat was no fiction—His exceeding sorrow unto death was no fancy. When the scourges fell upon His shoulders it was true pain that He suffered. And the nails and the spear and the sponge and the vinegar—these tell of a real passion—a death such as probably you and I shall never know. Certainly we shall never experience that pouring out of our soul unto death which was peculiar to Jesus—in which He went far beyond martyrs in their most extreme griefs. There were points of anguish about His death which were for Himself, and for Himself, alone. "He has poured out His soul unto death," in grief most weighty—so weighty that it can never be fully weighed in any scales of mortal sympathy!

And He did this, remember, *voluntarily*. If I were to die for any of you, what would it amount to, but that I paid the debt of nature a little sooner than I must ultimately have paid it? For we must all die, sooner or later. But the Christ needed not to die at all so far as He, Himself, was personally concerned. There was no cause within Himself why He should go to the cross to lay down His life. He yielded Himself up a willing sacrifice for our sins; herein lies much of the preciousness of His propitiation to you and to me. Love, love immeasurable, led the immortal Lord to die for man! Let us think it over and melt into loving gratitude. A death endured out of *pure love*. A death which was altogether unnecessary on His own account and, indeed, a superfluous act, save that it behooved Him to suffer that He might fulfill His office of a Savior and bring us near to God. This is a matter which should set our hearts on fire with fervent gratitude to the Lord who loved us to the death.

"He has poured out His soul unto death." I will say no more about it, except that you see how complete it was. Jesus gave poor sinners *everything*. His every faculty was laid out for them. To His last rag He was stripped upon the cross. No part of His body or of His soul was kept back from being made a sacrifice. The last drop, as I said before, was poured out till the cup was drained. He made no reserve—He kept not back even His innermost soul—"He has poured out His soul unto death."

Consider these two truths of God together. He is the Lord God Almighty before whom the hosts of angels bow with joy. Yet on yonder cross He pours out His soul unto death. And He does it not because of anything that is in Him, that renders it necessary, but for *your* sake and for *mine*—for the salvation of all those who put their trust in Him. Put your trust in Him, then, without reserve. Pour out your souls in full *trust*—even as He poured out *His* soul unto *death*. Come and rest in Him and then see the reason why He is crowned with majesty. His death for your sins is the reason why He divides the spoils with the strong. He has His portion with the great because He "died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." This, which brought Him so much shame, has now brought Him all His glory. Come and trust Him! Come and trust Him wholly! Come and trust Him *now*!

II. Secondly and somewhat briefly. It appears in the text that our Lord did not only bear the penalty due to sinners but HE WAS NUMBERED WITH SINNERS. "He was numbered with the transgressors." There is a touch of nearness to the sinner about this which there is not in the first clause. He bears death for the sinner. But you would not suppose, if you had not read it, that He would be written in the sinners' register. He was not and could not be a *sinner*. But it is written, "He was numbered with the transgressors." O sinner, see how close Jesus comes to you? Is there a census taken of sinners? Then, in that census, the name of Jesus is written down. "He was numbered with the transgressors." He never was a transgressor—it was impossible that He could be. It would be blasphemy to say that the Son of God ever was a transgressor against His Father's laws. In Him was no sin in any sense, or shape, or form. His spotless birth, His perfect nature, His holy life all make Him, "separate from sinners." How, then, was

He numbered with the transgressors? This makes it the more marvelous because it is so hurtful to a man who is pure, to be numbered with the impure. What would any woman with a delicate purity of mind think if she were numbered with the harlots? What would any honest man among us think if he were numbered with thieves? But that would be nothing compared with the holy Lord Jesus being numbered with the transgressors. And yet to this He submitted for our sakes. I said that He could not be a transgressor. But we are not like He in this. Anyone of us could be either unjust or dishonest, for, alas, sin dwells in us, and the possibilities of its still greater development are rich! But Jesus was clean in nature and pure in heart and therefore He could never be tainted with evil. And yet the inspired prophet says, "He was numbered with the transgressors." This was a humiliation, indeed! This was coming down to where the sinner lay and bowing over him to lift him up.

Our Lord Jesus was numbered with the transgressors, first, by the tongue of slander. They called Him a drunken man and a wine-bibber—they even called Him Beelzebub. That was sharp enough for Him to bear, whom all the angels salute as "Holy! Holy! Holy!" Accused of blasphemy, sedition, and so forth, He had enough to bear from evil lips. Nothing was too vile to be cast upon Him by those who said, "Let Him be crucified." Reproach never spared the spotless one, but spent its utmost venom on Him. Like the Psalmist, He was the song of the drunkard. The very thieves who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

He was numbered with the transgressors in the earthly courts of justice. He stood at the bar as a common felon though He was Judge of all. Though they could not find witnesses whose testimony agreed, yet they condemned Him. Though Pilate had to say, "Why, what evil has He done?" yet He was taken out with two malefactors that He might die side by side with them. And then, we are told by the evangelist, the Scripture was fulfilled—"He was numbered with the transgressors" (Mark 15:28).

To go a little farther, our Lord Jesus Christ on earth was treated, in the providence of God, as transgressors are treated. Transgression sometimes brings on men poverty, sickness, reproach and desertion. And Jesus Christ had to take His share of all these with sinful men. No wind was tempered for this shorn Lamb. No winter's frost was stayed, no night dews dried to comfort His secret agonies—

*"Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer."*

All things in this world that are so keen and terrible to man, because man has become so guilty, were just as keen and terrible to Him. The sun shone on Him till His tongue was dried up like a potsherd and did cleave to His jaws and He cried, "I thirst." The nails that pierced Him tore His tender flesh as they would have torn that of the sinful. Fever parched Him till His tongue cleaved to His jaws. There was no softening of the laws of nature for this Man because He had never offended. But He had to stand as a sinner where we sinners stand—to suffer from the common laws of a sin-cursed world—though He was not, and could not, be a sinner. "In Him was no sin." Yet He was numbered with the transgressors.

And look, my brethren. Oh, that I may know how to speak properly on it! The Holy God treated Him as if He were one of *us*—"it pleased the Father to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief." God not only turned His back on transgressors but He turned His back on His Son, who was numbered with them. God never can forsake the perfectly innocent, yet He who was perfectly innocent said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Sinking and anguish of spirit, even to soul-death, cannot come to a man who is numbered with the perfectly righteous. It was because Jesus voluntarily put Himself into the sinner's place that He had to bear the sinner's doom. And He being numbered with the transgressors, the justice which smites sin smote Him. The frown that falls on sin fell on Him. The darkness which comes over human sin gathered in sevenfold night about His sacred brow. In the day of the Lord's anger, "He was numbered with the transgressors."

As this is the reason why He is now exalted, it seems to me that you and I ought to feel a mingling of grief and joy at this time to think that the Lord Jesus would condescend to put His name down with transgressors. You know what a transgressor is, don't you? One who has done wrong; one who has broken laws, and one who has gone beyond bounds and committed evil. Well, Jesus Christ says, "Father, that I might save these transgressors, put My name down among them." It was necessary that it should be so, that He, standing in our place, might lift us into His place, transferring His righteousness to us, as He took our sin upon Himself. I could weep as I tell you that "He was numbered with the transgressors."

I cannot preach. This theme baffles me altogether. I wish that you would look into it yourselves. Never mind my words. Think of my Lord and of these two things—"He has poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors."

III. That leads me to the third matter by which the Lord Jesus Christ has won His victories and earned reward of God. It is this—"HE BORE THE SIN OF MANY."

Now do not think that these words are mine, and therefore find fault with them. Deliberately observe that these are the words of the Holy Spirit. "He bore the sin"—"He bore the sin of many." They quibble with us for saying that He bore the chastisement of sin. We shall say it none the less plainly. But we shall go much further and insist upon it that, literally, Jesus bore the sin of man. Or else why did He die? Why did He die at all? "He was man," you say, "and, therefore, He died." There was no reason why the Christ should die because He was a man—for being born without the taint of sin and having lived a spotless life, and having never violated the law of God—there could be no justice in Christ's dying at all, if there was not some reason for it apart from Himself. It is an act of injustice that Jesus should be permitted to die, at all, unless there can be found a *reason* apart from His own personal conduct. If death is the consequence of sin, there being no sin in Christ, the consequence could not follow without the cause. You tell me that by wicked hands He was crucified—it was so, and yet the Scripture assures us that this was by the determinate purpose and foreknowledge of *God*. How could this have been, had our Lord had no connection with sin? It was not necessary that He should die because He was Man. He might have been taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. Or it might have been said of Him, as of Enoch, "He was not, for God took Him." If the rough Elijah ascended to heaven, how much more the gentle, tender, perfect, absolutely perfect Christ might have been expected to do so! There was no reason, then, in His personal nature, why He should die.

"He died," said one, "as an example." But, my dear friends, I do not see that. In His life He is an example to us through and through, and so He is in His death. If we must die, it is an example to us that we should die as bravely, as patiently, as believably, as He did. But we are not bound to die at all unless God requires it at our hands. Indeed, we are bound to shun death if it can virtuously be avoided. Self-preservation is a law of nature—and for any man to voluntarily give himself up to die without some grand purpose would not be justifiable.

It is only because there is a law that we must die that we may judge ourselves permitted to volunteer to die. The Savior does not set us an example in a sphere into which we cannot enter. In that case He goes beyond us altogether and treads the winepress alone. He is a Being whom we cannot follow in the higher walks in which He is both God and Man. In His great voluntary self-surrender unto death, the Son of God stoops from a position which we, who are mortal, because of sin have never held.

"Well," you say, "but Jesus Christ died as an exhibition of divine love." This is true in a certain sense, but from another point of view, of all the things I have ever heard, this does seem to me to be the most monstrous statement that could be made. That Jesus Christ, dying because of our sins, is a wonderful example of divine love, I know, admit and glory in. But that Christ's dying was an instance of divine *love*, if He did not die because He bore our sins, I entirely deny. There is no exhibition of divine *love* in the death of Christ if it is not for *our* sins, but an exhibition of a very different sort. The death of the perfect Son of God, *per se*, without its great object, does not exhibit love but the reverse. What? Does God put to death His only-begotten Son, the perfectly pure and holy Being? Is this the finale of a life of obedience? Well, then, I see no love in God at all. It seems to me to be the reverse of love that it should be so. Apart from sin-bearing, the statement that Jesus must die the death of the cross to show us that his Father is full of love is sheer nonsense. But if He died in our place, then the gift of Jesus Christ by the Father is undoubtedly a glorious instance of divine love. Behold and wonder, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." This is love, if you please. But not the mere fact that the Son of God should be put to death. That *would be* a thing altogether unaccountable, not to be justified, but to be looked upon as a horrible mystery never to be explained—that the blessed Son of God should die—if we did not receive this full and complete explanation, "He bore the sin of many."

If our Lord's bearing our sin for us is not the gospel, I have no gospel to preach. Brothers and sisters, I have fooled you these thirty-five years, if this is not the gospel. I am a lost man, if this is not the gos-

pel, for I have no hope beneath heaven, neither in time nor in eternity, save only in this belief—that Jesus, in *my* place, bore both my punishment and sin. If our Lord did so bear our sin we have a firm and joyous confidence. God would not accept a substitute in our place and then punish us. If Jesus suffered in my place, I shall not suffer. If another has gone to prison and to death for me, I shall not go there. If the axe has fallen on the neck of Him that took my place, justice is satisfied, the law is vindicated, I am free, happy, joyful, grateful—and therefore, bound forever to serve Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not know how you look upon this doctrine, but it seems to me to be something worth telling everywhere. I would like to make every wind bear it on its wings and every wave waft it on its crest. There is a just and righteous way to forgive sin—Jesus bearing the death penalty in the sinners' place—that whoever believes in Him should be justified from all things from which the law could not deliver him.

Now, these three things—that He poured out His soul unto death, and so bore the sinner's penalty; that He was numbered with the transgressors and so stood side by side with sinners; ad next, that He actually bore their sin and so came into a wonderful contact with sin which did not defile Him, but which enabled Him to put away the sin which defiled men—these three things are the reasons of the glory of our Lord Jesus. God, for these three things and one more, makes Him to divide the spoil with the strong, and divides Him a portion with the great.

IV. The last thing is this—"HE MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS." You see, all along Christ gets His glory by standing side by side with guilty men. A curious mine it is to get gold out of. I will not venture to say what Augustine, in a burst of enthusiasm, once uttered. When speaking of Adam's fall, and then describing all the glory that comes to God out of the salvation of the guilty, that holy man could not help using the unguarded expression, "Beata culpa!" "Happy fault!" Yet, though I would not say so much as that, I do see that out of this dunghill of sin Christ has brought this diamond of His glory by our salvation. If there had been no sinners, there could not have been a Savior; if no sin, no pouring out of the soul unto death; and if no pouring out of the soul unto death, no dividing a portion with the great. If there had been no guilt, there had been no act of expiation. In the wondrous act of expiation by our great substitute, the Godhead is more gloriously revealed than in all the creations and providences of the divine power and wisdom—

*"Sin, which strove that love to quell,
Woke yet more its wondrous blaze;
Eden, Bethlehem, Calvary, tell,
More than all beside, His praise."*

In the person of His dying Son, bleeding for human guilt, the Lord God has focused the splendor of His infinity. If you would see God, you must look to Calvary. God in Christ Jesus—this is God, indeed. God in Christ Jesus—bearing sin and putting it away—here you see what a God can do in boundless love! "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But this is the *finale* of it. He makes intercession for the transgressors. Who among us will take up the part of the guilty? Who will plead for the guilty? I know, in certain cases, the lawyer will sell his tongue to the most polluted. But if a man were perfectly pure you would not find him saying a word in defense of the guilty, would you? So far as the man was guilty he could not be defended. Unless there were a fear of too severe a punishment, no one would take his part. And even in that case, the offender is viewed as so far deserving that he is not guilty enough for so heavy a penalty, for the guilty we could not plead so as to deny or extenuate evil.

A just man would plead for innocent persons who might be falsely accused—but our Lord made intercession for transgressors. When He was here on earth how tender He was with transgressors! Women that were sinners came around Him and He never bade them be gone. She that was taken in adultery, oh, how He dealt with her! When Peter was about to deny Him, He said, "I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." Those nights out there on the cold mountains were not spent for Himself, but for sinners. He bore on His heart the names of guilty men. He was always pleading their cause and when He came to die, He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He took their part, you see. He would clear them of guilt if He could. I dare say that He has often prayed like that for you. When you have been despising religion and saying vile things about your Lord, He has said, "Ah, poor soul! It is

like the ravings of a man in a fever who does not know what he is talking about. He does not know what he is saying. Father, forgive him."

Our blessed Lord pleaded thus when He was here. And now He has gone up yonder He is pleading still for the same persons. Though we cannot see through that veil which hides the invisible from us, yet the eye of faith, I hope, is strong enough to see that He is at the Father's side at this moment making intercession for transgressors. I do not picture Him up yonder as using entreaties or pleading to an agony. Oh, no! With authority He intercedes, for He has finished the work and He claims the reward. I do not even picture Him as using words. Those are the poor tools with which *men* plead with men. But the death which our Lord endured for the guilty is pleading with the Father. The death of Christ is a well-spring of delight to God. The Father thinks of what Jesus has suffered in vindication of the law, even of His obedience unto death. And *that* thought has power with the Judge of all the earth. In effect, the wounds of Jesus perpetually bleed. Still His cries of the great Sacrifice come up into His Father's ear. The Godhead, delighted to bless, is charmed to find the way of blessing men always open by the fact that the propitiation has been made, and the sin has been put away.

I cannot continue longer, for strength and time fail me. Only it does seem to me so delightful to think that Jesus pleads for sinners. If you see Him die, He is dying for sinners. If you see Him with His name written down in a register, that register is the sinners' census book—His name is written there that He may be in a position advantageous for sinners. If you see Him pleading now that He is risen, He is the advocate for sinners. Did you ever read this text in the Bible—"If any man does not sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"? No, you never did! But I will tell you what you *do* read there—"If any man *sin*, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "If any man *sin*." Is there anybody here that never sinned? Then there is no Christ for you. He never did anything for you and never will. Are you guilty? Do you feel it? Do you confess it? Do you acknowledge it? Christ is for *you*. If a doctor were to set up in the town he would never think of sending out a circular in such terms as these—"Henry Smith, M.D., invites healthy persons to call upon him, for he is proficient in the healing arts." There will be no business for "Henry Smith, M.D.," among the healthy folks—let him be as learned as he may. And if he is known as an eminent physician, he does not need to intimate that sick persons are welcome to call upon him, for the very fact that he *is* a physician means that he lives to serve the sick.

My Lord Jesus Christ, with all His saving power, cannot save those who do not need saving. If they have no sin He cannot cleanse them from it. Can He? What, then, have some of you to do with the Savior? You are very good, respectable people that have never done anything wrong in all your lives—what is Jesus to you? Of course, you go your own way and take care of your own selves and forget the idea of being beholden to free grace. Alas, this is folly! How foolish you are to think you are such characters! You are nothing of the sort. If you look within, your heart is as foul as a black chimney that has never been swept. Our hearts are wells of defilement. Oh, that you could see this and quit your false righteousness! If you will not, there is nothing in Jesus for you. He derives His glory from sinners, not from self-conceited folks like you. But, you guilty ones that will admit and confess your guilt may cheerfully remember that those four things which Jesus did, He did in connection with sinners—and it is because He did them in connection with sinners—that He is this day crowned with glory and honor and majesty.

Jesus Christ does not shrink from sinners. What then? O you sinners do not shrink from Him! If Jesus does not shrink from sinners—(let me say it again)—you sinners, do not shrink from Him! If we were to go today to some of those unhappy parts of the world in the north of Europe (it makes one's blood curdle to think that there are such places), where poor decaying lepers are made to live alone. And if these poor creatures came our way, we should wish them every blessing and should desire for them every comfort. But while we were *expressing* our kind wishes we should be gradually edging off and leaving a distance between ourselves and their horrible pollution. That is *not* the way in which Jesus acts towards sinners—He draws near and never sets a hedge between Himself and them. You need not undergo quarantine before you may enter the port of salvation by Christ. Yonder is a filthy leprous sinner—as full of filth as an egg is full of matter—but Jesus comes right up to him and lays His hand upon him and says, "I will. Be you clean." Jesus never keeps at a distance from the sinner.

But suppose this poor leper began to run away from Him. It would be natural that he should, but would also be very foolish. No, poor creature, stop your running! Stay at Jesus' feet! Look to Him! Trust Him! Touch His garment and be healed! O my dear hearers, in this pulpit I seem to stand a long way off from you and talk to you from afar but my heart is with you. I wish I knew how to persuade you to come to Jesus. I would use some loving logic that I have not yet hit upon. How heartily would I entreat you to trust the Son of God, made flesh, bleeding and dying for guilty men! If you will trust Him, He will not deceive you, but you shall be saved, and saved at once, and forever!

And, O you that love Him and know Him, will you learn one lesson, and then I will send you home? As Jesus does not shrink from sinners, do not yourselves shrink from them. You are not so pure and holy as He was and yet He came into the world to save sinners. Go, each of you, into the world to seek them. Be in earnest after sinners. You get so good, some of you, that there is no living with you. You forget the dunghills where you grew and fancy yourselves angels, but you are nothing of the sort. God has made something of you, and now you are too respectable to look after those who are no worse than you once were. If a man sins, you do not speak to him lest you should be disgraced by his society. What pride! A man is known to be a drunkard and there are some, even of you, that are teetotalers who would not talk with such, but leave them till they are improved, and then you would speak to them. You will do them good if they come to you for it but you will not *go to them*—you cannot bring your souls to handle the wound while it bleeds and touch the filthy while they are foul. Some are too fine and finicky to look after roughs.

But I venture to say to the rough, the ragged, the graceless, and the godless—that they are more likely to get a blessing than the self-righteous. I believe that there is more likelihood of converting a down-right out-and-out sinner than of reaching the consciences of your very nice, neat, hypocritical people. Do not, therefore, shrink from sinners, for Jesus did not. And as from them He won His brightest trophies, even so may you. Be not ashamed, even if, by talking with sinners, you should come to be taken for one of them, for your Lord Himself, “was numbered with the transgressors. And He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Let it be your vocation, as a man redeemed by blood, to be “the sinners’ friend,” henceforth and forever. God help you to do it! O my beloved, may God send a blessing upon us at this hour. Pray for it. Pray for it. Lord, send it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON

DEAR FRIENDS—With great pleasure I have prepared this sermon upon that truth of God which lies at the heart of the Christian faith. The denial of the substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord is the enemy of Christianity. Without atonement by the death of the Savior there is no gospel. I do not conceive “substitution” to be an explanation of atonement, but to be of the very *essence* of it. Those of us who have received the Lord Jesus as our expiation and righteousness know what divine power dwells in that precious truth. In a few days I hope to be on my way home—indeed, I may be so when this sermon is published. I crave a kindly remembrance in the prayers of the faithful. May there be years of useful preaching and fruitful hearing in store for preacher and readers!

Yours, in Christ Jesus,

C. H. SPURGEON.

Mentone, February 11, 1889.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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